

# The Perception of Cultural Heritage in the City of Trinidad de Cuba

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## Abstract:

In scientific research, the subject 'perception' has been studied from the cultural, touristic and environmental perspective. There is a lack of information about Trinidad in what the population knows, thinks, adds value to and how it takes part on the construction of the heritage, since this subject has not been developed yet. Been considered a recent study in the city of Trinidad, the objective of the research was aimed at determining characteristics of perception of cultural heritage among the inhabitants of the Trinidad city who can contribute to the maintenance of the status granted by UNESCO as Cultural Heritage. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted as the methodology, using the techniques of questionnaire and structured interview. For the application of the questionnaire, a sample of 360 people aged 16 and older was used, taking the data from the last Census, in 2002. Structured interviews were conducted with the researchers from the city of Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios Curator Office. The limited knowledge of the population about the cultural heritage and the importance of Trinidad as Cultural Heritage, as well as the limited participation in the cultural activities of the city and in the heritage conservation may be considered the main social threats to the heritage.

**Keywords:** Perception; World Cultural Heritage; Trinidad

## Resumo:

Na investigação científica, o tema percepção foi estudado desde o ponto de vista cultural, turístico e ambiental. Saber o que a população conhece, pensa, valoriza e como participa na construção do património são pesquisas insuficientes em Trinidad, uma vez que este assunto ainda não tinha sido tema de investigação. Sendo considerado um estudo recente na cidade de Trinidad, o objectivo da pesquisa foi determinar as características de percepção do património cultural entre os habitantes da cidade de Trinidad que possam contribuir para a manutenção da declaração concedida pela UNESCO de Património Cultural da Humanidade. A metodologia do trabalho tem um carácter quanti-qualitativo, onde se utilizou as técnicas de questionário e entrevista estruturada. Para a aplicação do questionário, foi utilizada uma amostra de 360

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peessoas a partir dos 16 anos de idade, levando em consideração os dados do último Censo de 2002. Foram realizadas entrevistas estruturadas com os pesquisadores da cidade de Trinidad e da Oficina del Conservador. O conhecimento limitado da população sobre o património cultural e a importância de Trinidad como Património Cultural da Humanidade, bem como a participação limitada nas actividades culturais da cidade e na conservação do património podem ser consideradas as principais ameaças sociais ao património.

**Palavras-chave:** Perceção; Património Cultural da Humanidade; Trinidad

#### **Resumen:**

En la presente investigación científica, el tema de la “percepción” se ha estudiado desde el punto de vista sociocultural, turístico y ambiental. Se pretende pues, conocer lo que sabe, piensa, valora y cómo participa la población, en la construcción del patrimonio. Porque hemos detectado que las investigaciones realizadas en Trinidad han sido insuficientes ya que hasta el momento no se ha trabajado la temática percepción. El objetivo de la investigación se orientó a determinar características de la percepción del patrimonio cultural en los habitantes de la ciudad de Trinidad que puedan contribuir al mantenimiento de la condición otorgada por la UNESCO de Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad. Se adoptó como metodología el enfoque cualitativo y cuantitativo, utilizando las técnicas de cuestionario y entrevista estructurada. Para la aplicación del cuestionario se tomó una muestra de 360 personas, en edad de 16 años o más, a partir de los datos del último Censo del 2002. La entrevista estructurada fue realizada con investigadores de Trinidad y de la Oficina del Conservador de la ciudad. El limitado conocimiento de la población sobre el patrimonio cultural y de la importancia de Trinidad como Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad, así como la limitada participación en las actividades culturales de la ciudad y en la conservación del patrimonio, pueden ser consideradas las principales amenazas sociales al patrimonio.

**Palabras Clave:** Percepción; Patrimonio Cultural de la Humanidad; Trinidad

#### **1. Introduction**

The World Heritage list registers the cultural and natural sites that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognises as exceptional and with

universal value. Cuba has nine sites with the status of World Heritage, being a "rich culture by its diversity and possession of an extraordinary intangible and tangible heritage" (Moré, 2006b: 5).

The World Heritage Committee, composed of representatives of 21 Member States, declared, in 1988, in Brasilia, the historic centre of Trinidad and the Valley of Los Ingenios, World Cultural Heritage, recognising its authentic historical and cultural values, disseminating it worldwide. The city, founded in 1514 by Diego Velázquez, is the third town in Cuba established by the Spanish settlers, in the province of Sancti Spiritus, and is the second Cuban site included on the World Heritage list.

The historic centre of Trinidad covers an area of 48.5 hectares, of religious, civil, domestic and vernacular architecture originating from the 17th to the 19th century, and demonstrates the different values of the city, the economic boom derived from the development of the sugar industry and genuine human work. The Valley of Los Ingenios "occupies an area of 276 km<sup>2</sup>, with numerous archaeological, architectural and natural sites of great value within" (López and Pérez, 2003: 12).

A historical city like Trinidad contains a rich and diversified cultural heritage, "whose understanding, recovery and productive reuse require a broader approach than purely architectural" (Troitiño Vinuesa, 2006: 5). The study on the perception of cultural heritage in Trinidad is inserted into a paradigm that this subject has never before been studied and it can be noticed from the results of research that, on behalf of tourism in the city, the perception is "producing different and new effects of meaning and interpretation actions "(Cousillas, 1997 apud More, 2006b: 122) which can be seen as a possible threat to social equity.

Therefore, the importance of studying the perception of cultural heritage in Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios is: understand what the people who live there know and think about their cultural heritage; how they understand the similarities and distinctions of the several collective perceptions; the questions about the cultural heritage of their city and what are their concern about this. It helps to understand what people think and how they interact with their heritage, how they describe it and how they identify their city as a cultural heritage site.

As mentioned above, it was formulated as a general objective to determine the characteristics of perception of cultural heritage among the inhabitants of the Trinidad city, which can contribute or become a threat to the maintenance of the status granted by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

As methodology in order to collect data, this study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The technique used in the field research was a questionnaire. The use

of the questionnaire, adapted from the research "Knowledge and Perception of the Spanish Historical Heritage Society" from Gabriel Morate Martín (2007) was aiming to have a direct contact with the population, so that they could express their opinions and attitudes within the theme developed.

The questionnaire was also based on the indicators - knowledge, acceptance, identity, participation and evaluation - constituted of the reviewed literature on the topic. The survey sample was 360 people, aged 16 or older, who were considered eligible to have civil rights (voting) and physical and mental abilities to respond to the questionnaire.

## **2. Perception and Cultural Heritage**

It is difficult to find in Trinidad of Cuba a point of separation between the material and the immaterial, since both complement the cultural heritage of the city. By touring in the historic centre of Trinidad, we can note the "component and defining parts of an urban centre, all of it declared a good of historical interest or very significant as World Cultural Heritage" (Castells, 2008: 9).

Throughout time, it has not been studied the perception of the population to know their understanding and knowledge about the Trinidadian heritage, in order to contribute to their maintenance. It is interesting to know what society defines as heritage and that it "builds its own history deciding which elements of their culture should reach the category of symbols of their identity" (Zamora Acosta, 2003: 11).

Perception can be studied in many ways, as Canevaro (2003) noted after he had conducted a survey regarding the manifestations of popular culture in the neighbourhoods and historic centres, aiming to establish communication between the city and the people. It has also been studied the perception of heritage, for example, in Spanish society, in order to "deepen the true meaning of heritage for society, finding out in what extent the Spanish know and appreciate their heritage" (Martín, 2007: 1).

The study of perception is inadequate in many societies and without the necessary investigations, it will be very difficult to know and understand the population's needs and the social processes of their environment, as stated Martín (2007: 3):

*It is a fact that the emptiness of research on how the people's perception of their cultural heritage persists, we'll continue to ignore the basic data to effectively link cultural heritage actions related to the needs of the population.*

The investigation of cultural heritage perception is necessary to know what people know and think about cultural issues; understand the similarities and differences among the collective perceptions; the "whys" about the cultural heritage of the city and what is the current concern. This helps to understand what people think and how they interact with their heritage, how they describe, identify and relate with their city as a World Cultural Heritage.

Studying the perception of cultural heritage in Trinidad is as important as researching the architectural character (built heritage) and also archaeological, touristic, legal, economic and social-cultural characters. Knowing what the population knows, thinks, values and how they participate in the construction of the heritage are insufficient investigations, since, so far, it has not been yet worked the perception in which the issue is known, to what extent is the construction, maintenance and perhaps the destruction of heritage, which limits the ability to respond to "variables that do not depend on the experts' opinion but on the historical trajectories of societies (or each of the groups composing) constituted subjects of their own history " (Zamora Acosta, 2003: 11).

Understanding the cultural heritage by the inhabitants of the Trinidad city helps in the interpretation and in the formation of a representativeness, which implies something that is part of the life and history of the city. Perceiving is not only knowing that Trinidad is a World Heritage Site, but to observe it as a dynamic process that requires the population's contribution to maintain its grant, since there are natural hazards to heritage, such as: natural disasters (sites suffer irreparable damage caused by natural events such as earthquakes, tsunamis or hurricanes); lack of budget or international projects (which makes difficult the restoration and beautification of the existing heritage) and among other dangers, those which come from society, when it is not involved and lacks knowledge about World Heritage, which also belongs to them.

The act of perceiving and interpreting the cultural heritage by the inhabitants of the Trinidad city is a dialogue between past and present, an inquiry into what can be done for cultural property, whether tangible or intangible. Gaining knowledge, participation and exchange between people and heritage is the answer to study the perception of cultural heritage as a key element to determine the characteristics that may contribute to its preservation.

One of the main factors contributing to the maintenance of the status of Cultural Heritage of Humanity is the perception that inhabitants have about their city. Therefore, it is consistent with the thinking of Marqués (2005, 6-7), who said: "the social agents involved in the preservation and maintenance of heritage, apart from the competent authorities, are the population close to the heritage site". Speaking of cultural heritage or activities without considering the population's

perceptions can lead to insurmountable contradictions, such as "increasingly alienate people from their heritage" (Baig, 2005: 1).

The population's perception helps to "identify objects and places that can be considered cultural heritage, related to the history of individuals" (Prats, 2005, 7), and also having the "social function of democratizing knowledge and, consequently, enhancing the heritage" (Goodey, Murta, 1995 apud Pires; Ferreira, 2007: 6). As mentioned above, due to insufficient research on the subject, of knowing what people think and know about their heritage, the next question poses as a problem: what features the perception of cultural heritage among the inhabitants of the city of Trinidad has that can contribute or become threat to the maintenance of the status granted by UNESCO?

Knowing what the population thinks, understands and identifies as the heritage of its city, it can provide a platform for discussions, create and evaluate cultural activities for the population. In turn, they can be more involved of conservation, assisting in the conservation of cultural heritage, because they already know its value and the importance of their city as World Heritage.

Perception begins to be assimilated from childhood to adulthood, when there is a selection and identification of what the environment represents for each person. In that environment, there is the cultural heritage of each city, which is revalued by the population's perception. Psychology and sociology are indispensable to materialise the study of cultural heritage perception in Trinidad. The first is the basis of the term that is studied and seeks to understand individual behaviour of each person through psychological processes and the latter studies the way social interaction is conducted.

The perception of cultural heritage in Trinidad is part of the knowledge that people get along life, it can be conceived at first as a social representation, because looking at the heritage, an image is imprinted on your mind, and through it the subject is able to represent the object, because he built it in his memory. In a second stage, when the abstract becomes concrete and can interpret the stimuli received, this process leads the individual to know, to identify, assess and comment on something that previously was not perceived or, was perceived, but not interpreted. Interpretation is the formation of individual consciousness of the subject and his relationship with the perceived.

A look at the tangible and intangible is the perception of cultural heritage that through the subject's knowledge of his environment values and interprets what he sees. It aggregates importance, sense of belonging and representation. It is an indispensable element to understand

the processes and build a culture inserted into the heritage of the city. Therefore, there are characteristics in the population of the Trinidad city on the perception of cultural heritage, which can contribute to the maintenance of the status granted by UNESCO, but also others that might become threats.

Through perception, it is possible to engage people in the conservation, maintenance and appreciation of cultural heritage so that "(...) through interpretation, understanding; through understanding, appreciation; and through appreciation, protection " (Tilden, 1998 apud Pires; Ferreira, 2007: 10). Interpreting, appreciating and protecting the heritage can be considered useful and it can lead to the construction of alternative courses in cultural processes, by allowing to know the people's perception about their heritage and, from their perception, may propose protective measures and in some way involve in the work of preservation and maintenance of heritage.

### **3. The Cultural Heritage of Humanity**

The creation of the declaration of World Heritage, according to Santamarina Campos (2005: 60) is perhaps the most significant legacy of UNESCO, where the author gives a description of changes in interpretation about the heritage, conventions and decisions.

*It represents a transformation of the classical heritage conception (globalization of heritage) and encapsulates its policy regarding custody (awareness and safeguard). The Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage in Paris, 1972, established that there were heritage elements that should be protected and preserved, because they were the common heritage of humanity and the humanity should safeguard them, even though the countries where they are in do not take care of them.*

Rigol (2003) notes that, since the late 70s and 80s, began in Europe the ideas about integrated economic and social frameworks conservation, where the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the study for the conservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and UNESCO played a key role as managers of more advanced thinking on the subject. UNESCO (2009: 7) describes the creation date when it became operative and the definition of Cultural and Natural Heritage:

*The concept of World Heritage was recognised by UNESCO in Paris, in 1972 and operative in 1975, includes monuments, groups and sites as having outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science, and natural monuments, geological formations, natural landscapes that have exceptional value from the point of view of science or conservation.*

The concept of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Heritage of Humanity is associated with the concepts of protection and preservation thereof, it presupposes legal provisions and means to protect from physical deterioration, besides taking into account traditional knowledge, craftsmanship, way of life and people's worldview. In Cuba, the assessment of cultural heritage begins with the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, in 1959, rising a stage of organization and use of cultural heritage and proper ideological concept to make use of cultural facilities in accordance with the principles of the Revolution.

According to Arjona (1986), it was conceived the plan to develop museums around the country, with restoration of movable property workshops, training of specialized staff on monuments laws for the protection of cultural heritage were enacted, the Commission of National Monuments was created, and also the school of Museology and the National Centre for Conservation, Restoration and Museology.

In Cuban society, there are several sites, natural and cultural factors that are on the List of World Heritage. Cuba taking a leading position and responsibility as belonging to the list of countries with World Heritage status implies a commitment to society and State, contributes to the maintenance of the status granted by UNESCO and to a further study of this site, so that it can provide local knowledge to society and to other people. Apart from its cultural representation, it is also considered a market value, because it attracts visitors and has been converted into privileged places of international tourism system. Cobiella (2009) describes several Cuban sites that are on the list of recognised by UNESCO as sites of Natural and Cultural World Heritage interest:

- Historic city centre of Havana and its Fortifications (1982).
- Trinidad and the Valley of the Sugar Mills (1988).
- San Pedro de la Roca Castle, Santiago of Cuba (1997).
- Granma Landing National Park (1999).
- Viñales Valley (1999).
- Archaeological Landscape of the First Coffee Plantations in Southeast Cuba (2000).



- Alexander Humboldt National Park (2001).
- Historic Centre of Cienfuegos (2005).
- Historic Centre of Camagüey (2008).

According to UNESCO (2008), in late 2004, there were six criteria in cultural and four in the natural category. In 2005, this was changed so that there is only one set of ten criteria. To be included in the World Heritage List, a site must have an outstanding universal value and meet at least one of the following criteria:

1. Represent a masterpiece of human creative genius.
2. Witnessing an important interchange of human values over a period of time or within a world cultural area, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town planning or landscape design.
3. Provide a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or an existing or already vanished civilization.
4. Offer an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history.
5. Be an eminent example of a traditional human settlement, use of the sea or land, which is representative of a culture (or cultures) or human interaction with the environment, specially when it becomes vulnerable to the impact of irreversible changes.
6. Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas or beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should be preferably accompanied by other criteria).
7. Contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance.
8. Be one of the representative examples of major stages of Earth history, including evidence of life, geological processes creators of landforms, significant geomorphic or physiographic features.
9. Being one of the eminent examples of ecological and biological processes in the course of ecosystems evolution.
10. Contain the most representative and most important natural habitats for biodiversity conservation, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science and conservation.

Baéz (2009) states that the site being inscribed on the World Heritage List is a first step towards safeguarding, due to peoples' sensitivity on their heritage, be it cultural or natural, because "management preservation and permanent processes are of interest to both local communities, site managers and national authorities."

World Heritage means the representation of a country, its history, customs and culture, is a reflection of the society that produces it and so, in the next chapter, the research methodology and a historical approach to the city of Trinidad and the Valley of Los Ingenios as Cultural heritage will be presented, since the World Heritage represents the legacy of present and future generations and the responsibility to protect is incumbent upon all signatory countries of the World Heritage Convention, to the international community and civil society. Everyone has the right, the privilege and responsibility to understand and preserve the universal values pertaining to cultural heritage that, at the same time, belongs to humanity and has global significance.

#### **4. Methodological conception for the analysis of the perception of cultural heritage in the city of Trinidad**

As methodology to collect data, this study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches to enable, throughout the results, the use of statistics to understand the motivations, behaviours and opinions of the researched people; thus, by appropriating the respondents' experiences and reflections, this study can critically report the descriptive analysis of the work.

The research has a sociological character, taking into account some elements of psychology and also sociological, since it investigates a social group in the context of an area considered as World Heritage Site by UNESCO, a very special way to "discover and describe how a society understands the world" (Zamora Acosta, 2003: 12); because it doesn't impose a vision or a bias which is higher or lower in a society; by studying people who are part of a society and it is involved in their perceptions of the cultural heritage, that means, to know, to review and criticise.

In order to know – in the investigation - about the characteristics of the cultural heritage perception that Trinidad's population has, Psychology studies were important to establish which is an external stimulus (sensations) and which is perception (interpretation). People were not studied individually, by taking in account their behaviour and interrelationships, but rather as a group of people, which resulted in the research sample to know how they get related to the socio-cultural environment and their perception about the patrimony.

The perception of cultural heritage in the study, by having as subject the population and as object the Cultural Heritage of Trinidad, was investigated by considering the way the population perceives the heritage, how people see it, what makes them interested, the social threats (those ones related to the perception of the population) and those ones which can contribute and / or endanger the condition of Trinidad as Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as there are others threats, as Baéz says (2009) related to the "natural and administrative causes."

The ethnographic method, dedicated to the observation and description of the various aspects of culture, routine and people's life, based the field study with the resident population in the city of Trinidad, noting its main characteristics as a social group and then describing and interpreting, also allowing to understand current realities and human perceptions. It was applied by observing the social life of the place, "in which the ethnographer uses his own human conditions, ability to communicate and capture the meanings of social life, to interpret and understand the actions of others in certain social contexts" (Pineda, 2009: 2).

For the conception of research, the variables analysed were the perception of cultural heritage and the condition of cultural heritage of humanity. Social indicators, formed from the main definitions discussed in the research, were: knowledge, acceptance, appreciation, identity and participation; the questionnaire and interview were designed from the reviewed literature on the subject and according to the indicators.

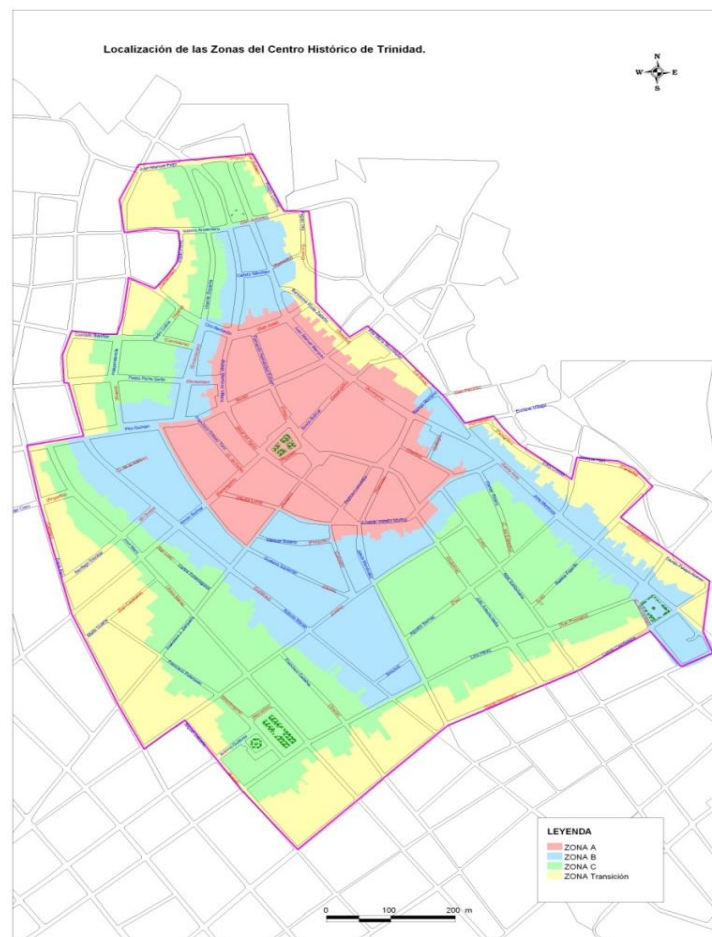
During the realization of fieldwork, a questionnaire that aimed to have direct contact with the population was applied, so to express their opinions and attitudes towards the subject discussed, to, later, do the analysis of responses and gather a large volume of descriptive statistics. It was adapted from the Knowledge and Perception of Historical Heritage Research in the Spanish Society, from Martin (2007), which helped determine to what extent the population of Trinidad know, participate and appreciate their cultural heritage.

The statistical universe for the composition of the data analyzed in this study was the population of the city of Trinidad, in Cuba and the unit of analysis, the population living in the city, so priority was given to a sample of the population aged 16 or older, as the age which residents in the country are considered eligible to exercise the right of voting and should possess the potential physical and mental abilities, providing more robust answers to the questionnaire, given the maturity in the formation of their personality.

To carry out the work, it took into account the total number of inhabitants living in the city of Trinidad, considering the 2002 Census data in the Municipal Bureau of Statistics, which are the most up-to-date data they have. It goes up to a total of 41,293 inhabitants. Of these, 8,212 are

children within the ages from 0 to 14 years old, so they were excluded from the sample. People of higher age were a total of 33,081, accounting for 80.1% of the population, constituting the sample universe. From the above population, considering, in this case, the adult population, a sample of 360 inhabitants, which represent 1.1%, was taken. All this was calculated mathematically by probability sampling. The random sample obtained can be considered simple, which allows considerations not only for the studied population, but also for the entire context of the city.

The questionnaire and structured interview were held in June 2015, with the questionnaire being answered by residents from areas A, B, C, transition zone (TZ) from the historic centre and also by residents of the periphery (P) of the city (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Historic centre areas**

Source: City of Trinidad and the Valle de los Ingenios Curator's Office, Master Plan Department, 2010

The questionnaire purpose was to verify the residents' perception on Trinidad's world heritage with questions about gender, education level, residence area, occupation, definition of cultural heritage; if they agreed that the historic centre of Trinidad should be considered cultural heritage of humanity; if the historic centre being a world heritage site makes it an identity factor for the Trinitarian; the importance of preserving the historic centre as a world heritage, among other questions. As for the structure interviews, researchers and city historians working at the Curator's Office were asked to describe, in their work, the history, the granting of cultural heritage of humanity, heritage conservation status, restoration policies, among other questions.

This geographical distribution was done with the objective of having different perceptions on cultural heritage, as people that are located in the historic centre, mainly in zones A and B, identify what they perceive as necessary for economic development city, where conservation is fundamental to this achievement, while people living in the periphery feel remote and some do not understand the importance of cultural heritage, its value and the much still needed to be done for its conservation.

The Urban Historic Centre declared area "has 1168 monumental buildings, mostly homes, representing the domestic architecture of the 18th and the 19th centuries and occupies an area of 48.5 ha" (Lopez and Perez, 2003: 10). Historic centre areas are divided according to the historical-architectural, integrity and condition values. To protect the heritage of the historic centre, degrees of protection that correspond to its assessment, condition, their relation with the environment and other factors that determine their social and cultural interest were established.

The statistic package used for quantitative data was SPSS version 15 and Microsoft Office Excel 2007. The quantitative and qualitative results were interpreted descriptively.

## **5. From Village to City of Cultural Heritage of Humanity: A historical approach to Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios**

On the declaration issued by UNESCO in Brasilia, in 1988, with ten criteria, items 4 and 5 are the ones that declare Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios Cultural Heritage and second Cuban site inscribed on the World Heritage List world. These items are:

4- Provide an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape, which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

5- Being an eminent example of a traditional human settlement, use of the sea or land, which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment, specially when it becomes vulnerable to the impact of irreversible changes.

The former village of the Santísima Trinidad, now known as Trinidad of Cuba, belonging to the province of Sancti Spiritus, was founded in 1514, in the 16th century by Diego Velázquez; it is the third of the first seven villages founded by the Spanish colonizers. "It is located in the south centre of the country" (González, 1997: 7), has as main limits: "the north is protected by the Guamuhaya mountains, on east, the San Luis Valley (...), extends itself to the proximity of the city of Sancti Spiritus. For the West, the Tayaba (...) River. To the south, the Caribbean sea "(Santana, 2008: 186).

The territory belonging to Trinidad, called Valle of los Ingenios, occupies an area of "276 km<sup>2</sup>, which are scattered by numerous archaeological, architectural and natural sites of great value" (Lopez and Perez, 2003: 12). The perimeter declared Heritage of Humanity "includes three geographic areas: the San Luis Valley, the Valley of Santa Rosa and Meyer Agabama-depression, all inserted in the historical and social-economic phenomenon of the last century "(Lopez and Perez, 2003: 12).

The urban historic centre of Trinidad gives the example of architectural ensemble maintained over time, a native of the 17th to the 19th century, demonstrating the different values of the city's religious, civil, domestic and vernacular architecture, the economic boom derived from the development of the sugar industry and an authentic human work. The paving stones and houses deliver a colonial atmosphere with the natural landscape, leading to a key touristic attractive for the development of the city.

The historic centre has features that are highlighting worth due to the preserved traces of the original layout, "for being irregular or spider web shaped, through which growth spontaneity is reflected" (City of Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios Curator's Office, 2008) and their curvatures, cracks and inequalities, Trinidad has remained with the cobbled streets (...) "(Santana, 2008: 282) that give exceptional heritage value.

The newspaper "Vocero Cívico" published, respectively in 1954 and 1956, the opening of institutions like the Lyceum Society, the Gustavo Izquierdo Library and the decrees and laws regulating tourism in Trinidad, in which the "Association for Trinidad is invested as delegate of the Cuban Tourism Board as a matter of Conservative Institute of the city of Trinidad" (Echemendía, 1954: 257).

With the triumph of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959, protective actions were consistently continued and also the government implemented new cultural policies throughout the country. In 1974, the building known as the Palacio Brunet Romantic Museum was reopened; recognition of Trinidad by the National Monuments Commission as "National Monument" was in 1978, beginning in this period major studies to determine the area of greatest historical value" (Vázquez, 2008: 3). The Municipal Monuments Commission would then regulate the activity of protection and largely restoration actions of local heritage.

Currently, the responsible for the restoration and conservation of the historical town is the Master Plan of the Curator's Office, whose main objectives, among others, are "to investigate, diagnose and propose intervention plans for the historic centre and to the properties thereof, besides the management and approval of changes in land use and integrated management of heritage " (City of Trinidad and the Valley of the Sugar Mills Curator's Office, Master Plan Department, 2010: 2). It also plans to establish a management plan, which responds to the need for a planning tool to face the challenge of protecting and sustainably manage the monuments.

It would be interesting that the institution responsible for "taking care" of the heritage city always take into account the words of Santana (2008) apud Cruz (2008: 19) when he states that the declaration of Trinidad as Cultural Heritage is not a simple coincidence, it is because of the economic and social aspects of the past and therefore must be preserved, and also keep the aspects that makes it an universal heritage:

*No wonder Trinidad has been distinguished with this declaration of World Heritage as well as Havana, that does not mean it is more valuable, but more exceptional. What is this exceptional about? Well, first the condition of typological integrity in which the city has reached our days: Trinidad is an extraordinary case of preservation of a historical past; it is preserved as it was in the past. This relation between historical and natural environment preserved is what makes Trinidad a very exceptional case to be maintained.*

It is population's and public institutions' duty to maintain the conservation of the historic city and its Valley of los Ingenios, so that, for the next centuries, it remains an example of exceptionality. Tourism in Trinidad began in the 90s as a new economic alternative "because, in 1989, the Cuban government faced an economic crisis caused by the decline of socialism" (Vázquez, 2008, 5) and constituting an important "source of income necessary to stabilise an economy hit hard by the decline of socialism and the strengthening of the blockade of the United States" (City of Trinidad and the Valley of the Sugar Mills Curator's Office, 2008).

The convenient solution to this crisis was to announce to the world that the freezing of Trinidad in time by economic and geographical factors were interesting to be appreciated by the idea of working on cultural, sun, beach and nature tourism. Cultural tourism was based on cultural heritage, main attraction of Trinidad, which, added to the natural attractions, constitutes what it has today as a tourist product marketed nationally and internationally.

With the advent of tourism, the city was not ready to receive a non-traditional economic alternative and with the mass arrival of tourists it was necessary to restore some buildings and rehabilitate them for tourism, thinking about what is now called private lease for hotels, since there were not available, at that time, in the city, enough hotels to meet the tourist demand.

Like any city starting with a new economic alternative, there were strategies to "embrace" the local tourism, such as mobilizing and strengthening the culture and cultural agents, in order to "give visitors the best and most native of its music, dances and craft traditions, while they redesigned and put into practice new conservation plans and urban revival in priority sectors" (Echenagusía, 2007: 17).

Today, the task of tourism is to contribute to safeguard the heritage of Trinidad, thinking that, for the enjoyment of future generations, this heritage must be limited on usage, authenticity and everything that can change or rehabilitate it in function of tourism should be well managed, considering the significance of the building and immaterial in a city declared a World Heritage Site, and a "historical and artistic study in question must be one of the most ambitious programmes of action (...)" (Escribano and Sanchez, 2004: 4), always coordinated with multidisciplinary actions between tourism and the public sector in the areas of collaboration, coordination and cooperation.

Perhaps, heritage cities lack tourism policy designed solely to stimulate cultural tourism, to make use of participatory revenue and carry out conservation of tangible and intangible heritage, indispensable for the tourist market, because as stated Vázquez Nieto (2005: 1), there is a "lack of a tourism policy designed exclusively for heritage cities".

Still, each city considered World Heritage maintains its features and elements that allowed it to boast the category awarded by UNESCO and at the tourism market, which reflects the international category of product and touristic segment diversification, patrimonial cities offer a "highly competitive product (...) and that encompasses the cultural, the monumental, artistic and, in many cases, natural heritage. We are, of course, much more than a beach and a palm tree, because we are the World Heritage and the Heritage of Humanity" (Vázquez Nieto, 2005: 1).

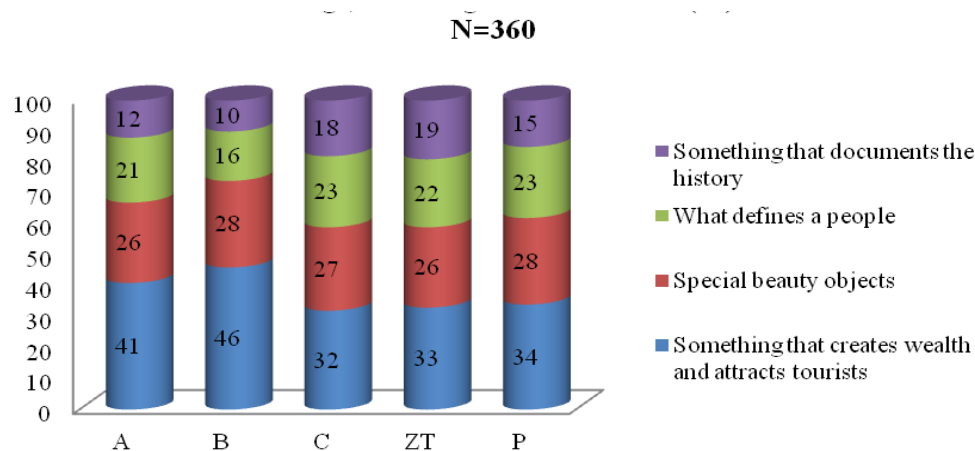


## 6. Results of the perception of cultural heritage in Trinidad

From the sample size, a random selection of the population was made and then proceeded to the collection of information required for analysing the data. The sample was made as follows: of the 360 people surveyed, 53% are women and 47% men, 98% are from Trinidad and only 2% are not, 99% permanently living in Trinidad and 1% not.

68% of the population is aged between 16 and 45, and 32% is aged 46 or plus. 57% of respondents have a higher level of secondary education (pre-university and technical school), 25% higher education and only 2% primary level. On the level of population's employment, 37% are top-level media professionals and technicians and the rest are housewives, self-employed, etc.

Zones A, with 41%, and B, with 46%, are the ones that specify with more percentage the definition of Cultural Heritage such as generating wealth and attracting tourists. However, the upper secondary education, with 21%, said objects of special beauty as closer to heritage definition (Graph 1).



**Graph 1. Population's perception on the definition of cultural heritage according to residence area**

Source: Author

Areas A and B are the most representative when it comes to operation and expansion of tourism in the city of Trinidad, as they are located in the monumental area of historic centre, which explains their perception about cultural heritage.

According to the references used in the theoretical framework, cultural heritage is related to heredity, with identity, a social construction that links people with its history, a collective

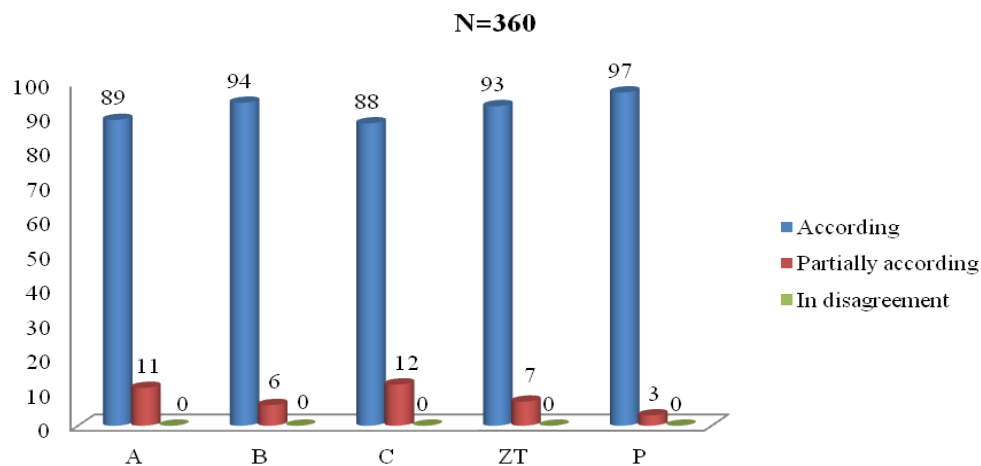
memory that can remember the past in this and other conceptual meanings that give importance to heritage. However, the prevailing definition that the population of Trinidad have on cultural heritage matches the research done by Flores (1997) apud Barretto (2003: 54), when studying tourism in the Brazilian city of Blumenau, which obtained as response on interviews that "the tourism is something that brings money."

With the population's answers, it is possible to note that they don't have a clear definition of cultural heritage and the benefits it can bring to them, because something that generates wealth and attracts tourists is a positive result of a tourism product that is used as "dynamic economic resource" (Azkarate *et al.*, 2003, 5) and not a type of model used by industrialized societies, who have a concept of "development understood as economic growth, where the culture is in a dependent level of economic development, limiting its scope to the acquisition and assimilation of knowledge" (Moré, 2006a: 56) and avoiding, in a way, the essence of heritage representativeness.

The other argument, which sees heritage as an object of special beauty, is considered an outdated concept, because heritage "is no longer focused on objects, but on the context" (Moré, 2006a, 17). If in the 17th century heritage was seen as an object of beauty, examples of aesthetic value, today they are conceived in a cultural context, as a "vehicle of social integration, such as work or legacy of the past in which a community recognises and identifies itself (...)" (Azkarate *et al.*, 2003: 5).

Perhaps, with tourism, the Trinidadian are mixing culture with economic development, which does not cease to be beneficial, because, at present, heritage is seen as dynamic, socialized among societies, which can be consolidated as a source of wealth and developing, an alternative to the city's economy and generator of economic flows.

On the level of acceptance that the historic centre of Trinidad is considered Cultural Heritage, over 88% of respondents agreed with the granting of UNESCO, highlighting the outskirts of the city with 97% acceptance; more than 3% partially agreed and none of the respondents disagreed, which we can understand from the answers on the "acceptance" indicator (Graph 2).

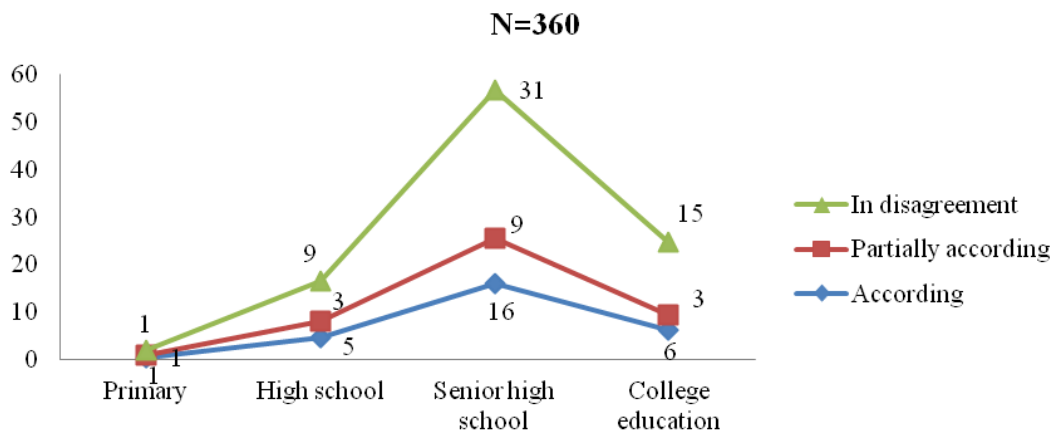


**Graph 2. Acceptance level by residence area of the Historic Centre Trinidad being considered Cultural Heritage**

Source: Author

The data confirms the point made by Troitiño Vinuesa (1995: 742) that this "small portion of urban fabric is a symbolic space that serves to identify, differentiate and give personality to the cities" and a "real book where traces of the past reveal the history of the city and its inhabitants" (Lery, 1987 apud, Troitiño Vinuesa 1995: 742). Although the majority of respondents felt that they agree with the qualification of the historic centre of Trinidad as World Heritage, it was not mentioned among the three most representative examples of cultural heritage of the city. The cause may be related to the fact that what the population distinguishes as cultural heritage is not the architectural ensemble, but each of the elements that forms this set, which can be appreciated in the historic centre, and serves as a "coat" for them, a bit of Trinidad seen as a museum without doors, walls nor windows.

Concerning the "identity" indicator, the condition of Cultural Heritage, for those with College education (15%) and Senior high school (31%) do not consider it as part of his Trinidadian identity, so they disagree. Between 16% and 28% of respondents partially agree that this condition is part of their identity, that it has additional value and identification with this place (Graph 3).



**Graph 3. The condition of Cultural Heritage as an identity factor, according to the education level of the respondent people**

Source: Author

If Trinidadians do not consider the status of Cultural Heritage as part of its identity, is because they do not feel recognised, they can not interpret the significance of the site, there is no deeper knowledge that will make them understand the value and, therefore, as this award is given by UNESCO, an international institution, this nomination is seen by Cuba as a title.

For this title to be considered by the public as important, the promotion and cultural activities are the main vehicles of communication, so that people can come to understand, appreciate and value this universal heritage which also belongs to them. To boost the cultural heritage so that it reaches all population layers, it is necessary that the promotion and cultural activities to areas of the historic centre and periphery are "from the community, for the community, with the community and for all the community, considering the important role that the community plays as leading axis in any process of cultural development " (Rodríguez, 2004: 10).

If Trinidadians do not recognise the declaration as part of their identity, it is because there is no promotion of awareness and identification with the heritage, either through the promotion of cultural activities, whether in school or in visits to museums. Keep in mind that when there is misinformation and ignorance, there is loss of identity, because memory is not able to remember what was not learned.

Cultural development and identity imply reproduction and recognition of the nourished values of cultural heritage, update citizens about the ways in which a society can appropriate itself of its own history and collective memories. By recognising the value of heritage, they are

taking into account features or elements that lead people to recognise and identify themselves with what they have in common, which is part of their culture and history.

## **7. Conclusion**

The historical antecedents demonstrate that it is not by chance that Trinidad is Cultural Heritage of Humanity, since the city's conservation and maintenance work begins with the Pro Trinidad Association and is currently in charge of the City of Trinidad and Valle de los Ingenios Curator's Office. Trinidad was granted the title of National Monument in 1978, and in 1988 UNESCO declared it Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which reaffirms its historical-cultural values present in a city of over 500 years of foundation. The main characteristic of cultural heritage perception in Trinidad, known from the results of the research, are the limited knowledge of the population on cultural heritage and the importance of Trinidad as a Cultural Heritage, limited participation in the city's cultural activities and heritage conservation, expressed in the fact that heritage is conceived as an economic rather than cultural capital.

The population has little knowledge about cultural heritage and the granting of Trinidad's heritage of humanity, as to the Trinitarians, cultural heritage is related to everything that generates wealth and attract tourists. In the survey, the heritage definitions linked to a people's identity and historical legacy were not mentioned by many of them, indicating that tourism, in fact, commercializes culture. Therefore, the perception of cultural heritage is linked to the economic factor and level of education, since the autonomous workers and the workers of the tourism sector perceive the heritage more as an economic resource than sociocultural. However, the higher the population's level of education is, the more they will be directed to realize the assets as an aggregating value of their identity and that tourism only appropriates it to make the tourists have a consumption experience of its tradition and cultural manifestation.

The population's limited knowledge about cultural heritage and the importance of Trinidad as a Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as well as the limited participation in the city's cultural activities and the heritage conservation process can be considered the two main social threats. The participation of residents in safeguarding the heritage and cultural activities that make them have interest to know and understand the importance of their city as a World Heritage and its historical representativity, are essential strategies to counter potential social threats.

There is a high acceptance to the fact that the historic centre of Trinidad is considered Cultural Heritage and the people recognise its value. However, it was demonstrated through their answers that they do not conceive the idea of the historic centre as an ensemble. The

population does not consider as part of their identity the status of Cultural Heritage, which may indicate that they don't see themselves recognised, don't know its meaning, have difficulty assimilating the declaration and can be seen it as nothing more than a title.

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